

Finally, let us remember the victims. Let us remember Officer Marc Dinardo and all of the victims of gun violence who, in fact, are out there protecting us each and every day. They will not know the good guy from the bad guy. They will know if this amendment passes and becomes law that someone could have a concealed weapon on them. At the end of their day, their lives will be greater at risk. That is not something I want on my conscience. I do not know which Member of the Senate wants it on theirs.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I do not want to get into the weeds here, but the Senator mentioned Michael Itheme. He did not have a carry permit. One of the other gentleman whom he mentioned, Willie Donaldson, evidently the court recognized that the person had acted in self-defense and he did not do any jail time for it.

The broader point is, criminals commit crimes, that is what they do. Criminals kill people. This is not directed at criminals, this is directed at law-abiding citizens who want to protect themselves. The statistics I mentioned earlier make it very clear. If you want to look at the studies, there is a lot more defensive gun use by victims than there are crimes committed with firearms. It is further estimated that there are as many as 2.5 million defensive uses of firearms in the United States each year. Again, many of those go unreported.

But I think you have to come back to the point that of the 5 million people in this country who are concealed carry permit holders, if you assumed that every instance of reported crime by gun control groups, of improper firearm use by individuals with concealed carry permits, if every one of those is true, something that can be debated, but let's assume it is true, over an entire year for every 142,857 permit holders, there would be one improper use of a firearm.

To put that another way, concealed carry permit holders would be 15 times less likely than the rest of the general public to commit murder. The point I am making is criminals commit crimes. That is what they do. They are criminals. Criminals kill people. What we are trying to do here is to allow law-abiding people to protect themselves from criminals when they travel across State lines, striking the right balance between Federal, the Constitution, which protects an individual's second amendment right, and State laws. We are not preempting State laws. Illinois and Wisconsin preclude or prevent anybody from owning a concealed carry permit or having a concealed carry permit in their States. So this amendment does not even apply to them. Nobody can carry a concealed weapon in either of those States. It recognizes the rights of States and all

of the State laws that apply. Most States have place and time restrictions. In my State of South Dakota you cannot carry in a place that serves alcohol, you cannot carry in schools, you cannot carry in courthouses.

So to suggest that somebody is going to transport a whole bunch of guns, which would be a violation of Federal laws because there are laws against trafficking, into an area of a State, public school, or someplace like that, are wild exaggerations and scare tactics that are not based on any evidence. The data we have that suggest the contrary.

I yield such time to the Senator from Wyoming as he may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I rise in support of the Thune amendment. The Thune amendment to me is very straightforward. It does not preempt State concealed carry laws, it does not create a Federal concealed carry permit. It simply allows law-abiding individuals, law-abiding individuals to lawfully carry concealed firearms across State lines while following the laws of the host State.

Just like a driver's license—this is my Wyoming driver's license—just like a driver's license, the Thune amendment is a license for self-defense across State lines. It means with this license—my concealed carry license from Wyoming—I will not be limited to Wyoming. Just like a regular driver's license, just about the same photo, identification issues, and the only difference is this one from Wyoming says “concealed firearm permit.” It has on it a picture of a handgun.

Well, today we are hearing the same arguments against the Thune amendment that we heard from the people who wanted to ban assault weapons. During that semiautomatic assault weapons debate, we heard all of the scare tactics. We heard: There will be blood all over the streets. Terrorists will be able to purchase Uzis and AK-47s. Our cities will turn into the Wild West. The lives of law enforcement will be in danger.

This is simply not the case. A study for the Department of Justice found 40 percent of felons had not committed certain crimes because they feared the potential victims would be armed.

The National Institute of Justice conducted a survey that found that 74 percent of criminals who had committed burglaries or violent crimes said they would be less likely to commit a crime if they thought the victim would be armed.

In States where concealed carry permits are issued, it is a fact that the crime rates go down. Let's take a look at Illinois and Florida. Illinois does not allow concealed carry permits. The number of murders last year in Chicago, 511.

Since Florida passed their concealed carry bill and signed it into law, violent crime has dropped by 32 percent,

and murders in Florida dropped 58 percent.

Criminals do not get licensed to carry guns. Criminals do not fill out the paperwork, go to the courthouse, get fingerprinted, and wait weeks to receive their concealed carry permit. Criminals issue their own concealed carry permits.

In the District of Columbia, crime rates are high because the criminals have the advantage over the victims. The gun laws in the District outlaw law-abiding citizens from self-defense while people walk home from work or from the store. They know it is highly unlikely in the District of Columbia that the victims will be carrying a gun for self-defense.

This is a commonsense amendment. It makes sense for law-abiding gun owners all across the country. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the Thune amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask that the Senator from New Jersey be recognized for 9 minutes and then, after an intervening speaker on the other side of the aisle, the Senator from California be recognized for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the amendment that is being offered, because it would override our safety laws, gun safety laws in my State and other States across the country. The Thune amendment is an outright violation of States rights.

The fact is this vote is not about the Second Amendment, it is not about gun rights, this is about respecting local communities and letting them make their own decisions about how to keep their streets, their homes, and their businesses safe.

As this dangerous amendment gets pushed to a vote, we are seeing opposition grow across this country. In addition to newspaper editorials, we are seeing Governors and mayors and local law enforcement calling on the Senate to vote against this amendment.

This placard shows the wide-ranging groups opposing this amendment, groups opposed to the Thune amendment: Over 450 mayors, people who have responsibility for those in their community, Major Cities Chiefs Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police, State Legislators Against Illegal Guns, National Network to End Domestic Violence.

In a letter to the Senate, the International Association of Chiefs of Police implored Congress to:

Act quickly and take all necessary steps to defeat this dangerous and unacceptable legislation.

That is from the International Association of Chiefs of Police. They know what to do about concealed guns, and they will decide within their own communities. But the Thune amendment